*173 On the following Monday all meant to arrive promptly at the meeting; however, out of habit, instead of coming to Ségou-Sikoro [69] they went to Ségou-koro (1). Ngolo went there too,

[778]

1. Which was, for all practical purposes, their holy place.

bringing with him the four principal idols: ba Koungo-ba, Nyé-dingué-dou, na Ngolo-ko and Kolokoloni. Addressing the throng, he cried: "Someone must be chosen to look after these idols, for they are languishing in neglect. As for me, I shall keep the sacrificial knife."

"If the idols are languishing," interrupted Ngolo Ké-ba, "it's your fault, because our master has entrusted them to you. That's your duty, quite as much as guarding our master's houses at Ségou-Sikoro. For our part, all we want are guns and gunpowder."

"I can't give you guns and powder," answered Ngolo Dyara, "but I will give you all of Ton-massa's wives as well as the wives of Kanou-ba-nyouma and Kafa-dyougou. I can't marry them myself because I've married Mamari's daughter. The powder and the guns remain my share."

"That's nothing but trickery," replied Ngolo Ké-ba. "Why should we need these women when we all have our own!"

[587] "I'm not playing any trick," said Ngolo Dyara, "I'm offering you these women because it is customary among us for brothers to marry the wives of their deceased brothers and, if I were to keep them for myself, you would certainly cry scandal and injustice."

"No, we shan't say anything, for we're at your mercy and very uneasy. We're caught like a rat in the claws of a cat."

"Well, I'll do you no harm, provided that you swear to leave me as the guardian of everything up to the time when we once more have a master."

He dismissed them and called a meeting of the chiefs for the following Saturday at Ba-dyi-soumalén-ba, on the left bank of the Niger. Each chief was expressly ordered to bring with him only his kasa-bearer (2).

2. The kasa is a kind of woolen coverlet

583 Most often, however, the heirs either marry the widows
589 or send them home, or the women leave of their own volition.
768 An heir who marries a widow of the deceased must take
[587] her back to her family, obtain their consent, and pay them a new bride price, required because a new usufruct is involved. The chronicle of Ségou shows us how this custom operates. Upon the death of Dina Wara, his son escorted to Ségou his father's widow, Biton's sister, whom he wanted to marry. He made sumptuous gifts in order to obtain consent.

In the case of a widow who is sent home or who leaves of her own accord, responsibility for the bride price already paid rests with the party who broke the contract, i.e., with the person who sent the widow away or, if she left of her own accord, with her family. The question of responsibility for the bride price is an important one, since usually neither party has either the means or the desire to make it up. As a result, every effort is made to evade payment, and it is common practice to resort to the most shameless bargaining of the woman involved. A husband is sought who will agree to pay the bride price asked by the one having rights over her, but most often, partial payment will be made when the woman is returned, the creditor's impatience is calmed by gifts, and the balance of the bride price remains wholly or partly unpaid [190] at the time of the debtor's death. This obviously results in insolvable complications during and after the marriage (1).

1. Concerning the lot of widows, see the discussions about the widows of Biton and Ngolo in the chronicle of Ségou.

567 Slaves. Enslavement comes about in many ways, but the
727 three principal ones are force, birth, and the result of obligations.

Force has perhaps been the primary cause of enslavement. A person who surrenders is the chattel of the conqueror, but the treatment given him varies in accordance with his previous situation. Was he a man of position? If he is violent, he is killed or sold; if it is thought that his relatives will pay a high ransom, he is kept. If he is clever enough to arouse sympathy, he often is

582 It is not unusual for an old man to marry a very young girl; indeed, it is common. Although a young man rarely marries a very old woman, a woman may marry a man much younger than she is as a result of the customs involved with inheritance.

Kinship in the direct line is an obstacle, in infinitum. Certain collateral relatives may not marry each other: uncle and niece, aunt and nephew. Marriage is also an obstacle in
587 some cases: a man may not be the husband of two sisters simultaneously, although he may marry them successively; the same restriction applies to a mother and daughter and an aunt and niece.

A man may not marry the wife of his son, nephew, or younger brother.

No marriage can take place between free persons in good standing and people of caste or, still less, slaves.

584 Impediments. From the opening of negotiations to the moment when the woman is handed over, there is a very long interval [196] of time during which impediments may arise.

First marriages, with which we are here concerned, are community affairs. A young man who would undertake the matter on his own would be most imprudent for he is no more his own master than is the girl, and their wishes are not of the least importance; this is an occasion for the fa to bring off a profitable deal. The fa, therefore, opposes any match which does not suit his plans and, indeed, forces the young man to share his views. If the latter rebels, the refusal of the fa to recognize the marriage will deprive the wife and children of any claim to legitimacy in the eyes of the community which he heads. There is no legal recourse possible against such a decision, because each community is answerable only to itself for matters concerning it.

The girl is even more completely under the control of
[562] the community than the young man. Destined to be given in usufruct, she is entirely at the mercy of those holding this right over her. If she rebels, she runs the risk of being brutally brought to task through every means of coercion and, if in such circum-
[85] stances she has children, they can be taken from her by the community, to which they will then belong. Custom gives her no rights over them whatsoever.

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 601 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding to muso (muso, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to bira-muso = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister . . .

582 611 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the fa of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition

1. Op. cit.

of the blõ of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]
		46	

428 his oldest son. If there are only daughters, the goods are divided among them. Secondly, if there are no children, the heirs are the collateral males, or, in the absence of these, the collateral females. Third in line, if there are no collateral relatives, are relatives of preceding generations. In default of these, the fourth in line is the surviving spouse. If there is none, the estate is without heir, it goes to the head of the settlement (the dugu-tigi) when the settlement is an independent one, to the Fama in the contrary case (1)."

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

428 In the Bougouni region, Aubert distinguishes two orders of
587 succession: "First, that which concerns disposition of the women,
562 second, that which concerns disposition of the privileges and wealth of the faya ... as far as the disposition of women is concerned, the men succeed each other in the following order: 1. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 2. the men of the following generation in order of primogeniture; 3. the Fama ... And as far as wealth is concerned: 1. the oldest brother; 2. the son (always in order of primogeniture); 3. the father; 4. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 5. the oldest relative; 6. the Fama." (2)

2. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle) [.

Women can neither inherit nor transmit.

428 For the Bamako circle, Ortoli sets forth the following rules of succession: " ... Only men, in the following order, have rights of succession: 1. full brothers of the deceased in order of primogeniture, 2. half-brothers on the father's side in the same order; 3. sons of the deceased in the same order; 4. nephews of the deceased in the same order and following the order of primogeniture of the full and half-brothers (on the father's side); 5. grandsons and grandnephews following the same rule of order; 6. the village; 7. the Fama ... But as concerns the personal patrimony, the order of inheritance is as follows: 1. younger full brothers in order of primogeniture; 2. younger half-brothers on the father's side in order of primogeniture;

428 3. and 4. as above for the head of the family; 5. oldest full brother; 6. oldest half-brother on father's side; 7. the family; 8. the village; 9. the Fama ... Married women may transmit personal property in the following order: 1. her oldest son; 2. her husband's oldest son by another wife; 3. the husband; 4. the woman's family ... [587] At the death of her [73] husband, a woman is not required to marry his heir." (1)

1. Ortoli, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bamako) [Bambara Customs (Bamako Circle)].

851 We should explain here the notion of seniority which is not always easy to distinguish in a polygamous society. As a matter of fact, when two wives of the same husband bear children at roughly the same time, an intermediary announces the births to the fa, and the first baby to be announced is considered to be the oldest. It may even happen that the first one to be announced is in fact the last-born; [845] he nevertheless remains the senior. In the case of twins, the senior is the one brought forth last, for it is thought that twins are not conceived at the same time, and that the last-born is the one first con- [551] ceived. Certain special names are used for the oldest children: N'tyi for boys, Nya or Nyélé for girls.

643 At the Fama's death, several lines of succession are involved: that of his own family, that of the family community, and that of the patriarchy.

As far as election to the title of Fama is concerned, we have seen how the new Fama was the senior male of the same generation and same family as the deceased Fama, or the eldest of the following generation. It is noteworthy that in the case of no male heir, the succession passes to the Fama's daughter whose husband governs in her name; but that is an exceptional case.

643 When the new Fama is designated by the notables, he oc- 644 cupies the fortified residence of the previous Fama, where the founding ancestor is buried; the women and children of the deceased Fama must leave these premises. While his father lived, the Fama's eldest son led a luxurious and independent life; he often commanded an important dugu, sometimes founded by himself. At his father's death, he is a very important person for the new Fama.

562 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal
428 wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided
768 among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other
587 brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

428 The wife may have personal property given to her by her
562 parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband, and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keïta at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

562 A woman must not take part in any political discussion or
662 demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

562 Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male
561 brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful
575 hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

562 The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.